

Business Corner

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I am constructing a new building. What do I need to do before starting construction?

All new commercial construction requires submission of plans to Inspections for review and approval by the Development Review Committee. There will be specific information that is required as a part of that review process and certain fees will have to be paid prior to approval of the plans. You can contact the Inspections office at 252-972-1110 for more information.

Q. How do I get the address assigned for my location?

If your commercial property location is inside the City limits of Rocky Mount, you will be assigned your new address during the plan review process. If the location is outside the city limits of Rocky Mount but within the City's service territory for utilities, you will need to contact the E911 coordinator in the county in which your property is located to obtain your property address.

Q. I am a contractor and I construct new residential properties inside the City limits. Is there an easy way for me to take care of permits, water taps, and other fees without having to go all over City Hall?

If your residential property is inside the Rocky Mount city limits, you can choose to participate in the Builder's Express program. The application for Builder's Express can be found on our website. Participation in Builder's Express is for single family residential construction only and even though no deposit is required to participate, you will be required to have a good pay history. You may also contact the Inspections Division at 252-972-1110 for additional information. When you request a building permit through Builder's Express, representatives from the City will walk all of your paperwork through the process and contact you with a final number for payment remittance, saving you valuable time.

Q. There are no water or sewer taps at my property but the service is available at the street. What do I need to do?

You need to contact the Engineering Department at 252-972-1126 and a representative will determine the fees you will need to pay to have a water and/or sewer tap installed to service your property. Those fees must be paid upfront in order to have the taps installed and meters set.

Q. There is no electric service on my property. How do I go about getting electric service run to my property?

If your electric service is furnished by Rocky Mount Public Utilities, you will need to contact the Electric Division at 252-467-4800 and request that electric service be extended to your property. They will determine the location of the temporary pole and the service point onto the property. You will need to have an electrician set the temporary pole and have that inspected before the electric service can be connected. If your property is in the City of Rocky Mount but is serviced by one of the surrounding electric providers, you will need to contact that provider to establish service. The City will still inspect the location before service can be connected. If your property is outside the City limits but serviced by Rocky Mount Public Utilities the County inspector will inspect the service and notify the City once the service is approved for connection.

Q. My location is very dark at night. Who do I contact to get an area light installed?

You can contact the Public Utilities Representative at 252-467-4856 to inquire about what options you have for types of lights and location. He will make arrangements to meet you to determine the light location and will assist you with the remaining process to have the light installed.

Q. What information does Customer Service require to process my application for service?

For residential properties, we require a valid government-issued picture ID and either proof of ownership of the property, or a lease agreement authorizing you to occupy the property. For new construction or service at a commercial location, you need to contact our Inspections office at 252-972-1110 to acquire an Application for Temporary Utilities. If you are the one who will permanently occupy the property, you will need to acquire a Certificate of Occupancy to complete the process.

Q. What if I am the contractor for a large commercial or Industrial site? What do I need to do?

All new commercial construction requires submission of plans to Inspections for review and approval by the Development Review Committee. There will be specific information that is required as a part of that review process and certain fees will have to be paid prior to approval of the plans.

If the electric service will be supplied by Rocky Mount Public Utilities you will need to contact Rocky Mount Public Utilities, Energy Services Manager at 252-972-1274 to sign an Electric Service Agreement. You will need to have your projected calculations for your electric load before contacting us. You may also want to inquire about options for load management and peak shaving which may help reduce your electric usage and ultimately save you money. Prior to having your electric service connected, you will be required to post a utility deposit equal

to two months average bills. Your deposit can be made using cash, a surety bond, or an irrevocable letter of credit.

If you need natural gas service, you will also need to contact Rocky Mount Public Utilities Gas Engineer at 252-467-4827 to determine if natural gas is available at your location and to discuss your anticipated usage.

If City water and sewer is available, you need to contact the Engineering Department at 252-972-1126 to request water and/or sewer taps. Depending on the type of Industry, you may be required to obtain special permits. You may need to contact the Water Resources Compliance Administrator at 252-972-1408 to ensure that you have acquired any required Federal and State permits regarding waste discharge.

Q. What if I have an existing residential location that I am going to rent out and I need to have utility services turned on to make repairs? What do I need to do to get my services activated?

You will need to contact Customer Service either by phone at 252-972-1250 or in person at 331 South Franklin Street and talk to a Customer Service Representative. You will need to provide a valid government-issued picture ID and your Social Security card. The CSR will confirm your identity and run a credit check on you; first a check of our existing utility records and if you have never had service with us previously, they will run a credit check through Experian to determine if you must post a deposit. You will also need to obtain a building permit from the Inspections office (if required) prior to making the repairs.

Q. What if I have an existing commercial location that I am going to rent out and I need to have utility services turned on to make repairs? What do I need to do to get my services activated?

You need to contact the Inspections Department at 252-972-1110 to acquire an Application for Temporary Utilities or a Building Permit to initiate the process. Once done, you will need to contact a Customer Service Representative either by phone at 252-972-1250 or in person at 331 South Franklin Street. You will need to provide a valid government-issued picture ID and your Social Security card or tax identification number. All applicants for commercial accounts are required to post a deposit but deposits for repairs are generally less than usage-based deposits for occupied locations.

Q. How long does it normally take to have my service activated at my location?

In most circumstance, if meters are present, we offer same day service if your application is processed by 3:00 p.m. If your application requires a meter reset you should allow 24 to 48 business hours.

Some electric metering installations may result in delays longer than 48 business hours.

Q. What if the meters have been removed? Who do I contact to have them reset?

You will need to contact Customer Service either by phone at 252-972-1250 or in person at 331 South Franklin Street and talk to a Customer Service Representative. You will need to provide a valid government-issued picture ID and your Social Security card. The CSR will confirm your identity and run a credit check on you; first a check of our existing utility records and if you have never had service with us previously, they will run a credit check through Experian to determine if you must post a deposit.

If the electric meter has been removed for more than 6 months, or if tampering has occurred at the meter base, our Inspections office will be notified to inspect the electrical service. Any required repairs are the responsibility of the owner and must be made by a licensed electrician. Once the electrical service has passed inspection, the Inspector will release the order to the Electric Division approving the resetting of the meter. If the meter has been removed for less than 6 months, and no tampering has occurred, no inspection is required, but you need to allow 24 to 48 business hours once your application is processed, for the meter to be reset.

For gas or water service, if the meter has been removed, the Customer Service Office will send orders to the appropriate divisions to reset each meter. For all locations where meters have been removed, you need to allow 24 to 48 business hours once your application is processed, for the meters to be reset.

Q. I manage real property and I want to know what I need to provide to my tenant to get their utility services turned on.

You must provide your tenant with a current signed lease which identifies the lessee and all occupants at the property. The lease must include the effective date of the lease and the service address of the property.

Q. I manage multiple properties and am constantly adding new properties. Do I have to provide an update property list every time I need to turn on utilities at any of the properties I manage?

No. You can execute a Master Property Management Utility Agreement one time. This establishes you as a property manager and we rely on you to give us the

address of the properties you manage as you need the services turned on. We will no longer require an updated list of all properties that you manage. When you execute the Master Property Management Utility Agreement the first time, we will perform a credit check to determine if you are required to post a deposit. If a deposit is required you have the option of posting a master deposit, sufficient to cover all of your properties so that you do not have to make an individual deposit payment each time you turn on utilities for a property.

Q. I have been told I need a Certificate of Occupancy (C/O) to get utility services turned on. What is involved in getting a C/O?

You need to contact the Inspections office at 252-972-1110 to start the application process for a Certificate of Occupancy (C/O). They will schedule an Inspection to ensure that the property is safe to occupy and meets the required zoning for the location. There is a fee for a Certificate of Occupancy (C/O) and the Inspections staff will inform you of the status of the Inspection once it is complete.

Q. If I need to sell or show a commercial property and the services are still on in the former tenant's name what do I need to do to get the services switched into my name?

If the services have not been interrupted, you may contact Customer Service and request a Temporary Utility Agreement which is valid for 30, 60, or 90 days. There is no fee and no inspection is required **as long as the services are still on**. The Customer Service Representative will forward your completed Temporary Utility Agreement to the Inspections office for tracking.

Q. What do I need to do to include my commercial property in the automatic turn-on program?

A. The Property Manager/Owner must have established good pay history with the City of Rocky Mount and must maintain their good pay history to remain on the automatic turn-on list. The Property Manager will need to sign the master property management utility agreement. The Owner or Property Manager will need to keep a master deposit on file to cover all properties on the list. They will not be required to get a temporary Certificate of Occupancy from Inspections but will have to turn on electric and water (if available).

Q. If I choose to participate in the automatic turn-on process for my commercial property how will that affect my tenant?

A. The tenant will be responsible for requesting the City take services out of their name when they move but the City will assume no responsibility to confirm they actually move. The Property Manager/Owner will be responsible for all usage during the time services are in their name, regardless of whether the property is vacant or occupied. The Property Manager/Owner is not to allow the new tenant

to occupy a facility with service in the Property Manager/Owner's name without approval of occupancy from the City. The Property Manager/Owner is responsible for notifying a new tenant that they must have a certificate of occupancy before they can occupy a commercial space. The new tenant is responsible for acquiring a certificate of occupancy and applying for utility services in their name.

Q. My tenant is moving out. What is required for me to switch utility services at my commercial property from the tenant's name to the real estate agent's name to show, sell or seasonally protect the property?

A. If services have not been interrupted the simplest way is for the real estate agent's company to execute a master property management utility agreement, then for each property, they may request temporary utility service. The Customer Service Representative will have the real estate agent sign a temporary utility agreement for 30, 60, or 90 days. No inspection will be required. The real estate agent will need to pay a deposit unless the company has a sufficient master deposit on file. The real estate agent will have to turn on electric and water (if available). The real estate agent will be responsible for all charges until they request services be turned off. If no deposit is required, all of the above may be done over the phone.

Q. What do I need to do once my commercial property is leased or sold?

A. The real estate agent or seller needs to notify the new tenant or owner that they must have a certificate of occupancy before they can occupy a commercial building. The new tenant or owner is responsible for acquiring a certificate of occupancy and applying for utility service in their name.

Q. What will my deposit amount be if I only need to show, repair or winterize my commercial property?

A. You will only be asked to post a deposit equal to two months of average bills. The required deposit may be less than the previously required \$400 minimum. The City will take into account a vacant status if applicable when calculating the deposit. This should make it easier for you to establish utilities at a property to show/list the property for sale, inspect/repair the property for occupancy, or winterize the property during vacancy periods.

Q. What will my deposit be if I only need a temporary meter on a pole or on a construction trailer while I am building a commercial establishment?

A. The City of Rocky Mount has reduced the deposit for temporary service to \$200. The final deposit based on two months permanent usage will only be due when the electrical service goes from a temporary service to a permanent service.

Q. I have multiple utility accounts and sometimes coming into the Business Office is not convenient for me. What other options do I have for managing my utility accounts?

You can contact Customer Service by phone at 252-972-1250 and a Customer Service Representative will be glad to assist you with your billing questions. You may also visit our website at www.rockymountnc.gov/customerservice.html and make a selection from the menu. You can register your accounts and track valuable billing, usage and payment information.

Q. I sometimes have questions about my billing, usage or payments. Who should I contact to address my concerns?

You can contact Customer Service by phone at 252-972-1250 Monday through Thursday 8:30 am until 7:00 pm and Friday 8:30 am until 5:00 pm. Our Customer Service Representatives are trained to answer billing, usage and financial questions and will be glad to assist you. You may also visit our website at www.rockymountnc.gov/customerservice.html and make a selection from the menu. You can register your accounts so you can log in and access billing, usage and payment information. If you prefer doing business in person, you can visit us at 331 S. Franklin St., Monday through Friday, 8:30 am until 5:00 pm.